The Sutra on the Original Vows and the Attainment of Merits of Ksitigrabha Bodhisatta

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SUTRA ON THE ORIGINAL VOWS & THE ATTAINMENT OF MERITS OF KSITIGARBHA BODHISATTVA

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Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra

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Chapter One

Ubiquitous Supernatural Powers of the Exalted Buddha at Trayastrimsa Heaven

Thus have I heard: At one time the World-Honoured One sojourned at the Trayastrimsa or Tavatimsa Heaven and was preaching on His mother's behalf. At that time, innumerable Buddhas and Maha-Bodhisattvas from infinite world-systems in the ten quarters of space convened harmoniously, admiring the fully Enlightened One, Sakyamuni, for His transcendental wisdom and infinite powers in guiding erring beings to understand the dissimilarity between the bases of happiness and sorrow in the world. They all escorted their attendants to offer homage to the Honoured One.

The Honoured One smiled and radiated multi-radiant beams of infinite compassion, supreme wisdom, benevo-

lence, etc., despatching forth into space sounds of the six paramitas; sounds of infinite compassion; sounds of charity; sounds of emancipation; sounds of bliss; sounds of transcendental wisdom; emitting lion-roars; emitting great lion-roars; emitting thunderous sounds; and a great number of other indescribable sounds. Many beings from the ten quarters of space in this world and additional worlds had assembled jointly at Trayastrimsa Heaven. They approached from celestial worlds such as the Caturmeharaja-kayikas — the four Heavens of the four deva kings, Trayastrimsa Heaven, Tusita Heaven, Nirmanarati Heaven, Paranirmita-vasavartin Heaven, Brahmaparisadya Heaven, Brahmapurohitas Heaven, Mahabrahman Heaven and from numerous other Heavens.

All devas, spirits and dragons from the seas had combined together, as also beings from various worlds and this human world, such as spirits of the sea, storms, rivers, trees, hills, earth, spring, spirits of the fields, day, night, spirits of the empty spaces, the skies, of drink and food, spirits of the grass and woods, and all the other spirits. Likewise, there came beings from different worlds and the human one; such beings as great kings of pretas, asuras, succubus pretas, preta spirits of sickness, the pretas of poi-

son, the kings of the pretas of joy and prosperity, the kings of pretas of carnal love and prestige and many pretas and kings of pretas had gathered happily together.

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha told Manjusri, Prince of the Dhamma; “Now you perceive by mental vision that all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, devas, dragons, pretas and spirits from this and other worlds from this country, including other lands are assembled together in this Trayastrimsa Heaven. Do you know the precise number of them all?”

Manjusri told the Buddha, “O World Honoured One, even though I have enormous powers developed through innumerable kalpas, I am not well acquainted with the exact number.”

The Buddha told Manjusri, “Even though I behold through the eyes of a Buddha, I, too, am unable to disclose to you the accurate number of all these deities. They are all those whom Ksitigarbha has converted and capably guided from long, long ago. Some are to be relieved and directed by him in the future.”

Manjusri told the Buddha, "O Honoured of the World, I have long practised meritorious deeds and long ago attained unobstructed wisdom. Undeniably, I will trust your words, but those who pursue the Arahat path, the path of Heavens, the worship of dragons, and many beings who will be born in future, will be doubtful and reluctant to adopt what you have strongly emphasized as the truth. Devas, nagas, yaksas gandharvas, asuras, kinnaras, mahorags, and others of the eight classes with humans to be born in the future will be filled with suspense and hesitant, although you have pronounced the truth most zealously. If you compel them to believe, they will instead seek to spread evil of the Teaching. Thereupon, I earnestly anticipate that the Honoured of the World will narrate to us the original vows of this Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva as he commenced his Bodhisattva career and how he laboured to gain such inconceivable success and authority."

The Buddha told Manjusri, "Suppose that every blade of grass, wood, forest, paddyfield, hill, stone, dust mote, every material thing — though numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and though each sand-grain is one world and each dust mote is one kalpa and all numbers are reversed into kalpas, that which he has done to accomplish the

Dasabhumi — (ten stages of the fifty-two sections of development), even though they are more than can be manifested by words, they are surpassed by the deeds of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in his Arahat and Pratyoka Buddha stages."

"Manjusri, this Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, his vows and his powers, are indeed inconceivable. If beings, both males and females, to be born in the future, shall listen to and hail the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, institute homage to Ksitigarbha by chanting his name, communicating offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and draw or carve his image or make likenesses of him, all these beings shall be born for one hundred births into a special heaven, this is the Indra Trayastrimsa Heaven (thirty-three in number), the second of the six Heavens of formation, and shall never descend into the three evil states forever."

"Manjusri, this Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva had been the son of a respected elder of unaccountable kalpas ago. At the time when he established his first resolve there was a Buddha by the name of Lion-Power. The youth examined with awe the majestic appearance of the Buddha and questioned what he had conducted as a Bodhisattva and what

vow he had performed to accomplish such a divine appearance. The Buddha imparted to the youth, “If you want to gain such an appearance, you must attempt your utmost to relieve the sufferings of all sorrowful beings and continue this practice for a long, long time.” Then the Sakymuni Buddha told Manjusri that the Buddha Lion-Power had counselled the youth to decide on a vow, as follows — “I now determine to relieve the sufferings of beings in the six realms of suffering and sorrow, skilfully leading them to Salvation through innumerable kalpas, before I myself attain Buddhahood.” By the youth disciplining such a strong vow before the Buddha Lion-Power, thereupon, for unaccountable kalpas, he has remained in the Bodhisattva stage.

Again, there was another Buddha, at a time inconceivably long ago, who was named Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment and who survived to a very great age of millions of kalpas. There are three stages for discharging respect to a Buddha —

a) to the Buddha incarnate,
b) to his image, and
c) a declaration of faith and respect.

At the second stage of offering respect to a Buddha, there was a Brahman girl who had in past ages practised great benevolences. Apart from being respected and honoured by people, she had also been bestowed with relief and protection from devas ever since the beginning of her career of charity. But her mother refused to respect the truth of the Dhamma and always uttered evil against the Triple-Gems. Although the "Sacred Daughter," as she was called, subjected herself to excessive persuasion over her mother to embrace Right Understanding, the mother was thickly prejudiced against her daughter's counsel and guidance.

When the mother died, she was reborn in the Avici Hell (Hell of unceasing sufferings), the last of the eight hot Hells where punishment continued without intermission. The Brahman girl was fully aware that her mother did not accord to the Doctrine of Cause and Effect and committed many evils in her life; by such bad deeds, therefore, she would surely sink into an evil birth in the lower Hells of intense suffering. Conscious of this Karma, the daughter parted with all her property and belongings by the offering of flowers and other forms of offering at the temple or pagoda of the Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment. The image of the Buddha therein was

magnificently carved and was to be admired in all appearances. She insinuated deep respect to this Buddha and sought reasoning solely by herself, "This Buddha is fully enlightened and all-pervading in wisdom. If he were still embodied in this world of manifestation, I would request of him where my mother has been cast. I feel sure he would know the exact realm of her person." After such a thought, she knelt before the Buddha's image and was in a most tearful disposition for a considerable length of time.

Suddenly, she contacted a voice from outer space, addressing her thus, "Sacred Girl, whimper not so sorrowfully. I will impart to you where your mother has gone." The Brahman girl clasped her hands in deep respect and replied to the voice, "What divine being will relieve me of my worries and apprehensions? Since my mother's death, I have been remembering her day and night in prayers but I fail to discover where she is being reborn." Then the voice responded to her filial love, "I am the Buddha whom you are now leading your Faith to and I am aware of your devotion to your mother, which is quite different from that of other children; thereby, I am here to enlighten you about her." When the Brahman girl took heed of this, she fell to the ground and again wept bitterly in an almost end-

less state. She feared that she would soon perish from the human world and implored the Buddha to avail her anxiety as to where her mother had been reborn. The Buddha replied, “Sacred Girl, after your offering, return home early, be seated and compose yourself in meditation, then concentrate on my name quietly and you will then cherish the idea of associating where your mother is.”

When the Brahman girl had finished paying homage, she went home and did as she had been instructed. After meditating for a day and night, she suddenly found herself on a great shore. She beheld many fierce iron-skinned animals hurrying back and forth, up and down, East and West in a boiling sea. She also saw thousands and millions of men and women emotionally moving among the waves of the sea, attempting to escape from the cruel monsters with iron skins. Moreover, she attested Yaksas (demons on earth, or in the air, or in the lower planes which are malignant, violent and carnivorous. They have many feet, eyes and heads, and have sword-like teeth). These Yaksas were driving the poor men and women to the cruel monsters, and they themselves confronted the men and women angrily. The sight was so dreadful that the girl dared not prolong her gaze, although by the power of the Buddha,

she was not struck with any fear for herself. At that time, there existed a king of the sea-devils named "King No-poison" (the poison caused by either actions, words and thoughts) who revealed his hospitality to her and entertained her saying, "Sacred Girl, you are a good Bodhisattva, why do you venture to come to such a place like this?" The Brahman girl then requested for the name of the place. The poisonless Devil-king told the girl, "This is Mahachakravala (the first great sea in the West). The girl replied, "I was directed that there is a Hell in the interior of this great circular iron enclosure. Is this true?" King No-poison repiled, "Yes, this is true." Then the girl asked, "Why is it that I have come to a Hell?" King No-poison interpreted that it was either through the power of the Buddha or through her own good Karmic power as otherwise she would never be able to visit Mahachakravala. The girl then queried why the water of the great ocean was boiling and had so many sinners and fierce animals within.

Then King No-poison answered, "Those sinners are the new Deaths from the human world. After having passed away for forty-nine days with no descendants to do good deeds to relieve them from their sufferings and as a result of their having raised nothing for the benefit of humanity

during their lifetime but only that of committing sins in one way or another, their first punishment is to cross this Sea of Suffering which extends ten million miles eastwards. There is another Sea, where sinners suffer double punishments. East of this latter Sea in view is yet another Sea of Suffering where sinners suffer extreme tortures."

"The above three Seas are called Seas of Sufferings. Those who have committed sins through actions, words and thoughts, are cast into these Seas to be punished, as they should be, for their evil deeds."

The Sacred Girl asked King No-poison, "Where is Hell?" King No-poison answered, "Within the three Seas of Sufferings, there are thousands of varieties of Hells. There are eighteen great Hells and five hundred smaller ones where sinners have to undergo boundless punishments. Also, there are thousands of others where leniency is bestowed on all those who have not committed too serious offences during their lifetime."

The Sacred Girl said to King No-poison, "My mother has passed away recently. I am anxious to know where she has been sent."

King No-poison questioned the Sacred Girl, “What has your mother done during her lifetime?”

The Sacred Girl replied, “My mother, during her lifetime, had envious views of the Triple-Gems and had spoken evil against them. Many a time, she did strive to embrace Faith in the Exalted Buddha, but was insufficiently firm over it. She expired only a few days ago, and I have no idea where she is at the moment.”

King No-poison asked, “What is your mother’s name?”

The Sacred Girl responded, “Both my parents were Brahmans. The name of my father was Sila Sen-sen and the name of my mother was Yuet Tee-li.”

King No-poison answered the Sacred Girl with clasped hands and said, “My Sacred Girl, pray do not feel distressed and return home with a joyful heart as your mother has ascended to Heaven just three day ago. It was your earnest and filial devotion of making offerings to the Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment that your mother was relieved. Not only did your mother receive deliverance from Hell, but all sinners of the Avici

Hell also benefited from it, for they ascended to Heaven on the same day." After intimating to the Sacred Girl of her mother's Salvation, the King of the Devils retreated with clasped hands. With this enlightening message about her mother, the Sacred Girl felt that her earlier fears were unfounded. She then knelt before the Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment and expressed this strong vow, "I shall exercise my best to relieve people of their sufferings forever in my future lives of kalpas to come."

Sakyamuni Buddha then told Manjusri Bodhisattva that the King of the Devils, No-poison, is now the Bodhisattva of Wealth and that the Sacred Girl has been named Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.

Chapter Two

The Assembly of the Transformations of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva

Just at that time, an unaccountable number of transformations of the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva from Hells of numerous universes assembled at Trayastrimsa Heaven under the Ubiquitous Supernatural Powers of the Exalted Buddha and an unaccountable number of others who, being spared of their sufferings, also came to the same place holding flowers and joss-sticks in their hands to pay homage to the Honoured of the World. These beings had at one time been suffering endlessly, from kalpas to kalpas, in the ocean of birth and death. Through the great compassion and strong vows of the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, they were converted by him and thus attained Buddhahood. They all assembled at the Trayastrimsa Heaven and conveyed their fullest respect and admiration to the Honoured of the World by gazing at Him attentively.

Sakyamuni Buddha extended His golden arms to bless the unaccountable transformations of the Ksitigarbha and

said, "You are truly to be commended for having successfully converted so many human beings to real Salvation. In fact, I have adapted myself to innumerable transformations to lead all beings, either intelligent or ignorant, to righteousness and truth by all means. Although I have tried my utmost to convert the erring ones from this world of sufferings, I could see that there might be one or two out of every ten who are still sinful. I ask you to seek transformations of other Buddhas to convert them in all possible ways and means. There are without doubt intelligent ones who are likely to be converted after my preaching and attain Buddhahood by my persuasion to practise good deeds, but unintelligent wrong-doers can only be converted after a lengthy period of preaching. For the stubborn ones, it is useless to expect any respect or faith from them. In spite of all the obstacles, I had endeavoured to convert these miserable creatures and lead them to real Salvation by performing different transformations. I performed transformation as males, females, devas, spirits, devils, mountains, forests, streams, rivers, pools or anything to bring benefit upon human beings and to convert them all without any exception. Again, I transformed into Kings or Emperors of Heavens, Brahmans or Rulers of Continents, followers of the Buddha, Kings of countries, Prime

Ministers, officials of high ranks, Bhikkhus or Bhikkhunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, Saravakas, Arahats, Pacceka Buddhas or Bodhisattvas to convert mankind. Not only did I convert people in the form of the Buddha, but you should recollect how strenuously I have lived from kalpas to kalpas with unremitting toil to convert even stubborn beings to Salvation. Stubborn ones can still be found, and if they are cast into Hell for punishment you should remember how I request you to work earnestly to lift them to Buddhahood and Enlightenment till the next Buddha, by the name of Maitreya Buddha, will be born to this world."

Just at that moment, the various transformations of the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva from different universes were seen consolidated into one form and, with tears in his eyes, said to the Buddha, "You have been kind enough to bestow upon me supernatural power and transcendental wisdom for kalpas and kalpas. May my innumerable transformations of different forms be successful to pervade various universes to lead mankind to real Salvation. Though human beings have not the slightest interest in reaping good deeds, I shall strive to convert them gradually and bring great benefit and happiness to all. Pray, do not be disheartened over the evils of these beings, as I shall bear

the full responsibility to convert them to the supreme state of Buddhahood.”

Again, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva requested the Honoured of the World not to feel distressed over the evils of human beings in the generations to come by repeating his vow three times. Sakyamuni Buddha was thus highly delighted and said, “My blessings, I appreciate your strong vows and may you be praised for your efforts to heal the human world, and that your aim for Buddhahood after your firm resolution to convert them be achieved.”

Chapter Three

Observations of Retribution of Human Beings resulting from previous Karmas

At that time, Queen Maha Maya, mother of the Buddha, asked Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva respectfully with clasped hands, "My divine One, human beings in the Samsara world commit different sins. What retribution do they receive for their Karmas?"

Ksitgarbha Bodhisattva replied by saying, "There are millions and millions of worlds. In some of them, you will find Hells as we have in our Samsara world. In some of them, there are no Hells – like the Sukavati (Western Paradise). In some of them, there are females whilst in others there are none. In some, you will be able to hear the preaching of the Buddha but in others people are not privileged to listen to the Dhamma. In some, there are Saravakas, Arahats, Pacceka Buddhas, etc., whilst in others, these do not exist. Consequently, sufferings in different Hells are numerous and cannot be explained in detail."

Queen Maha Maya asked once again, “I only seek to know the types of suffering for beings of the Samsara world.”

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva answered, “My Sacred Mother, I will relate to you in brief. The retribution of Karmas of human beings in the human world are innumerable. Beings born disobedient to their parents or associated in bad ways, are cast into the Avici Hell and will continue to suffer from kalpas to kalpas with no means of escape. People who do harm to the Buddha by destroying His images and speak of the Triple-Gems disrespectfully or having no respect for the Teaching of the Honoured One, would be cast to the Avici Hell from kalpas to kalpas with no means of escape. Human beings who do harm to the sacred temples, commit adultery with monks or nuns or kill or harm others in sacred places, are cast into the Avici Hell for eternal suffering. Any being, following the practices of a monk with no pure embrace of the Dhamma, bullying others or committing various kinds of sins, is cast into the Avici Hell for similar punishment. Those who are prone to stealing things from temples, such as cash, rice, food, clothing or anything, would similarly be thrown into the Avici Hell for continuous sufferings.”

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva repeated to Queen Maha Maya, “Any of the above-named groups of sinners are punished perpetually.”

Queen Maha Maya asked Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva once again, “What is the meaning of Avici Hell?”

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva replied, “Sacred Mother, there are different Hells within the Mahachakravala. Besides the eighteen big Hells, there are some five hundred others to be found with different names, and still another thousand Hells. Avici Hells means Hells reinforced with iron, surrounded by iron walls, eight million miles wide and one million miles high. These Hells are fully filled with burning flames and are jointly linked up together with other Hells of different names. Among them there is one Hell by the name of “Avici”. The area of this Avici Hell is eight thousand square miles. The whole of this Hell, with iron walls, is packed with burning flames. Iron snakes and dogs with hot fire in this Hell run from the East to the West. Also, there is an iron bed and when one is cast there, he can see his own body filling it. Therefore, all beings are subjected to punishment according to their sins. Then, there are the Yaksas (Demons) with eyes similar to that of electric bulbs and hands in the shape of steel claws to scratch the sinners.

Yaksas pierce the sinners' bodies, throw them into the air and the fall kills them. There are also iron eagles which hook the eyes of sinners, and iron snakes which curl round sinners' necks. Long nails are pierced into the sinners' limbs, their tongues are pulled out by iron thongs and their intestines are sawn up. Molten steel is poured into their mouths. Hot iron wires are used to bind their bodies. Sinners suffer according to their evil actions by encountering innumerable births and deaths for kalpas and kalpas without any hope of escape. When this world comes to an end, sinners will be transferred to another world, and in the new world they endure more punishment.

The punishments in the Avici Hell are as mentioned above and those subjected to them undergo the following five orders —

1. Sinners to be punished throughout the day and night for kalpas after kalpas without any break, this answers to suffering without an end of time.

2. To be spread over the "Bed of Punishment" in one form or other with no limit of space.

3. Sufferings without limit as in the use of weapons for punishment such as iron-fork, iron-sticks, iron-

snakes, iron-eagles, iron-foxes, iron-dogs, iron-saws, iron-hammers, iron-pans, iron-wires, iron-ropes, iron-asses, iron-horses, iron-balls, melted-iron as well as various kinds of iron weapons.

4. Whether they be males, or females, civilized or uncivilized, old or young, rich or poor, devils or spirits or even devas must suffer for their unforgivable sins committed according to their Karmas without any difference.

5. To be cast into this Hell for kalpas after kalpas to suffer different kinds of punishment, day and night endlessly, i.e. life without any break, and with no means of escape until their retribution of Karma comes to an end.

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva told Queen Maha Maya, "This is but a brief description of a visit to Hell. To quote the names of Hells, the types of punishment and instruments used will take a period of one kalpa."

After listening to Ksitigarbha's discourse, Queen Maha Maya retreated respectfully with clasped hands and was seen in great sorrow.

Chapter Four

Evil Actions and Retributions of Karma of Human Beings of the Samsara World

At that time, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva told Sakyamuni Buddha, "Honoured of the World, only through your transcendental powers, am I then able to have transformations throughout millions and millions of Universes to enlighten suffering beings to real Salvation. It must be by your great compassion and supernatural power that I am also able to have such innumerable transformations. I solemnly promise to fulfil your instruction to continue to relieve beings from this state of suffering and to lead them to Salvation. I shall strive to work hard until the next Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, comes to this world. Pray, do not despair."

Sakyamuni Buddha then told Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, "The natural powers of perception of all those who have not yet been liberated from the Samsara world are of an unsteady nature. Sometimes they do good deeds and sometimes they commit sins. They receive their Karma

according to their deeds. They have to undergo births and deaths, to be tested continuously at different stages in the ocean of sufferings from kalpas to kalpas. They will always be in one of the following five states:

1. Human beings.
2. Animals.
3. Sub-humans in Hells.
4. Ghosts.
5. Asuras.

Like fish, they will be caught in nets. They may be set free for some time and be caught again."

I am tremendously worried over these beings, but as you are so resolute to fulfil the strong vows, which you have made kalpas ago, to work unremittingly to lead the erring beings to Salvation, I therefore feel the relief now."

Just at that moment when Sakyamuni Buddha was speaking to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, there was a Maha Bodhisattva by the name of Isvaradeva (King of the Devils) who spoke to the Buddha, "Honoured of the World, you have been most generous to speak in favour of the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva for the strong vows made by him to perform

kalpas after kalpas so energetically. Kindly relate to me in brief all that is determined by Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva."

The Buddha then told the King of the Devils, "Please listen carefully and attentively to what I say —

1) "When he was a King of a small kingdom"

"Innumerable kalpas ago, there was a Buddha by the name of Sarvajna Buddha, the Accomplishment of Buddha Wisdom. This Buddha lived a very long life of six million kalpas. Before he became a Buddha, he was a King of a small country. He was a great friend of the King in his neighbourhood. Both Kings practised the ten Principles of Righteousness. Unfortunately, the citizens of his neighbouring country always committed sinful deeds. Consequently, the two Kings consulted one another to discover ways and means of leading their citizens to live a virtuous life. The first King made a strong vow that he would do his best to be enlightened as soon as he could, so that he might enlighten his citizens to the path of Salvation. The second King vowed that he would never become a Buddha unless he could bring about the moral progress of sinful citizens when they would be able to achieve Enlightenment. The King who vowed to become a Buddha is Sarvajna Buddha

— the Accomplishment of Buddha Wisdom. The other King who made a vow that he would never accept Buddhahood unless he could bring all erring beings to Enlightenment is Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.”

2) “When he was the daughter of a Brahman”

Again, innumerable kalpas ago, there was a Buddha by the name of Pure Lotus Eyes. He lived a long life of forty kalpas. During the semblance of the period of the Buddha, there was an Arahat who worked strenuously to convert beings by propagating the Noble Teachings of the Buddha. There was a girl by the name of Kong Mok — the girl with bright eyes. She made offerings to the Arahat who asked her what her wish was. The girl replied, “I did some good work on the day of my mother’s death in order to relieve her from her sufferings. I long to know in what state my mother is at present.” The Arahat pitied her and started to meditate. He came to know that the mother of the girl had been cast into the Hell of Great Sufferings. The Arahat asked the girl what her mother did during her lifetime so as to be cast into the Hell and to receive such severe punishment. The girl replied, “My mother used to be very fond of eating tortoises, especially their eggs, and fishes fried or cooked. She therefore killed countless lives for food. Com-

passionate One, kindly let me know how to relieve my mother." Out of great compassion, the Arahat told the girl to chant the name of the Buddha of Pure Lotus Eyes earnestly and respectfully, and that she should carve images of the above Buddha so that both the mother and herself could benefit from it.

After being thus told by the Arahat, the girl disposed of her precious belongings, and with the money she had an image of the Exalted Buddha drawn and paid homage to it. Again, she begged to know where her mother was. Suddenly, one night, she saw the Buddha in the midst of a bright golden light as big as Mount Sumeru, telling her thus, "Your mother will be born to your family as a son of a servant and will be able to speak as soon as she can feel cold and hunger." Before long, the servant in her family gave birth to a son. The newly-born child spoke to the girl three days after his birth. This newly-born infant said to the girl who was weeping bitterly. "Whatever evil deeds one has done one will receive punishment without exception. I am your mother! After my departure from you, I was cast into a dreadful Hell to suffer severe punishment. It was on account of the good deeds offered by you that I am now born as a son of your servant. But, owing to the evil

deeds which I committed during my life, I can only live to the age of thirteen and will again be cast into the Hell. My child, what ways and means can you find to relieve me from my sufferings?” Upon hearing this, the girl was certain that the newly-born infant was her mother.

The girl then asked the newly-born child, “Since you were my mother in your last life, you ought to know what sins were committed by you so that you were cast into Hell?” The child answered, “I have committed two sins, both by killing lives and speaking evil as well as scolding others. Without your help, by practising good deeds, I can never be relieved from my sufferings.” The girl then asked the infant, “What kind of suffering were you subjected to in Hell?” The mother replied, “The sufferings were so numerous that I cannot fully relate them even if given a thousand years to do so. “Upon hearing this, the girl then wept bitterly again, “May my mother be relieved from Hell forever after?” Later the child died, at the age of thirteen.

Meanwhile, the girl was seen calling, “Oh, Buddha of the ten directions of Space. Please be compassionate and listen to me. If my mother can be relieved from the three States of Sufferings or be born into an inferior family or will

never be born a female again, I now make a strong vow in front of the image of the Buddha of Pure Lotus Eyes — I shall continue to forge ahead unremittingly to relieve all suffering beings from Hells as well as in any state of suffering from every Universe and lead them to real Salvation. I shall accept Buddhahood only when I have completed the relief of all beings from their sufferings."

After making such a firm declaration, the Buddha of the Pure Lotus Eyes then told the girl, "You are really a filial daughter to make such a strong vow for the benefit of your mother. May your mother be born as a Brahmacarin, a young Brahman after living for thirteen years. She will then live for a hundred years. After that, she will be reborn in the Universe where she will not suffer anymore, and there she will enjoy life for kalpas and kalpas until she finally achieves Buddhahood. Then, she will be able to convert as many human beings as the grains of sand in the Ganges River."

Sakyamuni Buddha told the King of Devils, "The Arahat who helped the girl with bright eyes to relieve her mother, is Aksayamati Bodhisattva. The mother of the girl with bright eyes is at present the Bodhisattva of Emancipation.

The girl with bright eyes is at present the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva was noted for his compassion and sympathy through kalpa after kalpa by making innumerable vows to lead the erring world to Salvation. If any male or female in the future, through ignorance, does not practise good deeds but commits sins through actions, words and thoughts or ignores the law of Cause and Effect, they will always suffer in any one of the States of Sufferings.

But, after the chance of meeting a person with wisdom, who persuades them to pay respect to the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva even for only a short length of time, they will certainly be relieved from the three States of Sufferings.

Anyone who relies on Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, pays homage to him or sincerely praises his meritorious acts, makes offerings of scented flowers and robes, jewels and various foods and beverages, will be reborn in the realms of celestial happiness for innumerable kalpas. When the effect of these meritorious deeds comes to an end, they will be reborn as kings of countries for hundreds of kalpas. These

rulers will remember the links of causation in their previous lives.

Then Sakyamuni Buddha told Isvaradevaraja, “Because the Infinite powers of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva prove to be so great and the benefits he bestows on beings are so inconceivably boundless, therefore you Bodhisattvas must remember his Sutra and endeavour to propagate it far and wide.” Isvaradevaraja then addressed Sakyamuni Buddha, “Honoured of the World, be not apprehensive; we, millions and millions of Maha Bodhisattvas, will surely carry out your instructions and, by the grace of your Infinite powers, we shall propagate the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra far and wide and bring happiness and benefit to the beings of the Samsara world.” After this promise, Isvaradevaraja returned to his seat with hands clasped in adoration. The Maharaja Deva Kings of the four quarters rose reverently from their seats and said to Sakyamuni Buddha, “Honoured of the World, since Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has made such great vows kalpas and kalpas ago, why are there still unconverted beings and why was it necessary for Ksitigarbha to renew his vows?” Sakyamuni Buddha told the four Deva Kings, “Very well, your question is very good. For the welfare of the four Deva Kings, devas and beings of

the Heavens or the worlds, at this time and for the future, I shall tell you how Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva with great compassion, relieved erring beings of the Samsara world from the ocean of birth and death, leading them to emancipation." The four Deva Kings replied, "We will listen most attentively to your words." Sakyamuni Buddha continued, "Although Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has converted erring beings through the kalpas, he is still not satisfied. He has great pity for those who wander in sin, knowing that no matter how hard they try, they will fall back into erring actions again and again. They are like link-grass which spreads far and wide. Therefore, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has renewed his vows again and again. He has unceasingly tried to find upaya (devices) suitable for saving the sinful and converting them to the Eternal Truth."

Then Sakyamuni Buddha spoke again to the four Deva Kings, saying, "If Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva encounters beings who commit sin by killing, he helps them to realise that such sins shorten their lives. If he encounters thieves and robbers, he will lead them to understand that such evil actions will bring suffering and poverty to those who commit them. When he meets adulterers, he tells them that they will be reborn as pigeons which are inseparable. He

tells those addicted to harsh language that they will be born into quarrelsome families. If scandalmongers are met, then he warns them of the danger of being born without tongues or with horrible boils in their mouths. He assures those with hot tempers that they may risk being reborn with ugly faces and deformed bodies. Misers will not be successful in gaining their wishes, greedy beings will suffer hunger and thirst, and sickness of the throat. When he encounters hunters, he warns them that they are in danger of dying by violence. Those who are guilty of disrespect for their parents will die in warfare. Those who burn forests will die mentally unbalanced. Those who are unkind to step-children will eventually receive the same treatment. Those who catch living things in nets will be separated from their children and families. Those who despise the Triple-gems will be reborn deaf, dumb and blind. Those who have no respect for the Teachings of the Buddha are always reborn in the evil realms of suffering. Those who steal from temples will be reborn in Hells for kalpas and kalpas. Monks and nuns guilty of sexual misconduct will be reborn as animals endlessly. Also the laity will be included in this punishment if they are well instructed in the precepts but violate them. Those beings who harm people with boiling water, fire, cutting or otherwise injuring them

will, in their next life, receive the same treatment. Those who encourage others to break the precepts shall be reborn as animals — always suffering from hunger. Those who are guilty of stupid extravagance will never get their wishes fulfilled. Those who are proud and look down on others will have low births. Gossipers and talebearers will be reborn without tongues or else with one hundred tongues. Those who cling to wrong views will be reborn in uncivilised places and endure suffering."

"Erring beings who commit sins in actions, words and thoughts are countless, so that I can only tell you some of them. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva knows that erring beings are different from one another and he accommodates himself to lead and teach them all, leading them to conversion. Evil beings suffer in this lifetime for their evil deeds and upon death will be reborn into the Hells for kalpas and kalpas before they can emerge therefrom. It is the duty of you Deva Kings of the Four Quarters to protect your subjects and countries and lead them away from the countless sins."

After hearing this discourse, the Deva Kings wept and departed sorrowfully, with clasped hands, reverently.

Chapter Five

The Names of Different Kinds of Hells

At that time, Samantabhadra Maha Bodhisattva requested Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva saying, "My meritorious One, please be kind enough to relate to devas, dragons and all beings of the Samsara world, in the present and the future, the names of different Hells and the kinds of punishment for committing sins so that beings in the future generations will realise the result of evil deeds and therefore will avoid evil."

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva replied, "My compassionate One, under the supernatural powers of the Buddha and your kind support, I now give you the names of Hells and the kinds of punishment for sinners in brief —

1. The Great Avici Hell

At the East of the Mahachakravala mountain which is extremely cold, for there is neither light of the sun nor the moon, there is a great Hell by the name of Great Avici.

Punishments in this Hell comprise of pain, form, birth and death. Such punishments continue without intermission.

2. Hell of Interminable Punishment

Where the wailing and screaming of sinners is heard because of pain.

3. Hell of Four Corners

Where hot and burning iron-walls surround this Hell and with flames of fire falling on the sinners like heavy raindrops. After the sinners are burnt to death, they are reborn for further sufferings.

4. Hell of Flying Knives

This Hell is surrounded by mountains made of Knives. In the air, there are millions and millions of sharp walls with curved Knives which will fall on the sinners. When the Knives fall on the sinners' bodies, the bodies will be slashed to pieces.

5. Hell of Burning Arrows

Where millions of Burning Arrows pierce through the sinners' hearts and bodies.

6. Hell of Crushing Mountains

Where sinners will be crushed to pieces between two Mountains.

7. Hell of Knife-like Spears

Where sinners' bodies will pierced through by these Spears.

8. Hell of Iron-Trains

Where sinners' bodies are turned and run over by the burning iron-wheels of these Trains.

9. Hell of Burning Iron-Beds

Where sinners' bodies are placed on these Beds to be burnt to death.

10. Hell of Iron-Cows or Oxen

Where sinners are pierced or stepped over by the horns or hoofs of these Cows or Oxen.

11. Hell of Burning Iron-Clothing

Where sinners are wrapped up by the burning Iron-Clothing.

12. Hell of Thousands of Burning Iron-Swords

Where sinners are forced to lie on them which pierce through their bodies. Knives are also seen flying from the air, hitting the sinners' bodies and cutting them to pieces.

13. Hell of Burning Iron-Asses

Where sinners are forced to ride on them.

14. Hell of Molten Brass

Where sinners have Molten Brass poured into their mouths.

15. Hell of Brass Pillars

Where sinners are forced to embrace the burning Brass Pillars.

16. Hell of Burning Flames

Where sinners bodies are burnt by the Flames falling on them like rain-drops without any chance for them to escape.

17. Hell of Tongue-Ploughs

Where sinners' tongues are used as Ploughs to plough the land.

18. Hell of Iron-Saws

Where the heads of sinners are sawed.

19. Hell of Burning Iron Ground

Where sinners are forced to walk on it with bare feet.

20. Hell of Iron Eagles

Where sinners' eyes are pecked by Iron-Eagles.

21. Hell of Burning Iron-Balls

Where sinners are forced to swallow the Balls.

22. Hell of Quarrels

Where sinners are burnt with iron-claws and always seen in fights with one another.

23. Hell of Iron-Hammers

Where sinners are smashed by the Iron-Hammers.

24. Hell of Great Anger

Where sinners are made to fight against one another angrily.

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva said again, "My compassionate One, inside the Mahachhakravala there are innumerable such Hells of Punishment. Again, there are —

25. Hell of Wailing

Where sinners are thrown into the burning tanks with molten iron and they wail on account of severe pain.

26. Hell of Plucking Tongues

Where sinners' tongues are plucked by Iron-Hooks.

27. Hell of Urine and Manure

Where sinners are driven into the pit of Urine and Manure.

28. Hell of Brass Locks

Where sinners are locked against the Iron-Mountain and made to run.

29. Hell of Fire Elephants

Where sinners are chased by burning Elephants.

30. Hell of Fire Dogs

Where sinners are bitten by them.

31. Hell of Fire Horses and Fire Cows

Where sinners are chased or stepped on by the burning animals.

32. Hell of Fire Mountains

Where sinners are forced to walk between them and be crushed into ashes.

33. Hell of Fire Rocks

Where sinners are forced to lie on the Iron Burning Rocks with such Rocks pressed against them.

34. Hell of Fire Beds

Where sinners are forced to lie on them.

35. Hell of Fire Beams

Where sinners are hanged on them.

36. Hell of Fire Eagles

Where sinners are attacked by them.

37. Hell of Fire Saws

Where sinners' bodies and teeth are sawed.

And again —

> There is a Hell where sinners' skins are stripped.
> There is a Hell where the blood of sinners is sucked.
> There is a Hell where the feet and hands of sinners are burnt.
> There is a Hell of iron-trees with sharp thorns where sinners are dragged against the burning thorns.
> There are Hells of burning iron-houses where sinners are to be locked within them and then burnt to ashes.
> There is a Hell of iron-wolves which either run after or stamp on sinners' bodies and even bite them to pieces.

Inside such Hells, there are various kinds of small ones, either one, two, three, four or even up to hundreds and thousands of smaller Hells with different names."

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva then told Samantabhadra Maha Bodhisattva and said, "My meritorious One, the above Hells are formed purposely to punish all beings who are of the bad habits to commit sins, either through their actions, words or thoughts. The power of Cause and Effect is so great and inevitable. It can be compared to being as big as Mount Sumeru and as deep as the great ocean. Evil sins

are obstacles preventing us from practising meritorious deeds to aim for Buddhahood. That is why all beings should be cautious not to commit even the smallest sin. Never think that a small sin will not get any punishment in return. After one is dead, he or she will be cast into the Hell to be punished even for the smallest evil deed done. Close relatives, as that of a father and his children, may find themselves cast into different Hells. When they meet at the same Hell, however, they are not permitted – as well as being reluctant – to suffer on behalf of their beloved ones. By the supernatural power of our Honoured One, the Sakyamuni Buddha, I am now only relating to you the punishment of different Hells in brief. I hope you will be kind enough to listen to me."

Then Samantabhadra Maha Bodhisattva replied, "I have come to know about the punishment of evil deeds through actions, words and thoughts long ago. I earnestly hope that my compassionate One will kindly speak about the law of Cause and Effect so that every being of the future generation will learn the lesson from you to abstain from doing bad deeds, but to practise meritorious ones by aiming to attain Buddhahood."

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva said again, “My compassionate One, the punishments in Hells are as real as such. There are Hells where the tongues of sinners are used as ploughs. In some of the Hells, the hearts of sinners are pulled out and eaten by Yaksas. In some Hells, the sinners have to be put into boiling tanks and be boiled to death. In some of the Hells, sinners are forced to embrace burning brass pillars. In some of the Hells, sinners are circulated by burning flame.”

Inside some of the Hells, it is extremely cold and sinners are frozen to death. In some of the Hells, sinners have to float among the dirt of urine and manure. In some of the Hells, there are flying iron weapons which crush the sinners’ bodies. In some of the Hells, there are burning spears which pierce through the suffering sinners. In some of the Hells, the bodies of sinners are knocked against by iron sticks. In some of the Hells, the hands and feet of sinners are made to hold or walk on burning irons. In some of the Hells, the bodies of sinners are curled around by iron snakes. In some of the Hells, sinners are chased by iron dogs. In some of the Hells, sinners are forced to ride on iron asses.

People who have committed sins by killing, theft, adultery, lying, slandering, abusing, gossipping, craving and anger have to be cast into the above Hells for punishment without any chance of escape.

My compassionate One. The weapons of punishment in the various Hells are innumerable in kinds, either made of brass, iron, stone or fire. The stubbornness of all beings are as strong as brass, iron and stone which are difficult to break. The power of Cause and Effect on sinners is as dangerous as fire which will spread rapidly and burn things to ashes. If I am to speak about the sufferings of Hells in detail, there are hundreds and thousands of various kinds of sufferings in each Hell. Evidently, there will be more sufferings in more Hells. Under the supernatural power of our Honoured One, the Sakyamuni Buddha, and at your kind request, I am now only relating the sufferings in Hells very briefly. If I am to speak about the sufferings and punishments in Hells in detail, I cannot fully express them even through kalpas and kalpas."

Chapter Six

Sakyamuni Buddha Praising Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva

Sakyamuni Buddha radiated great brilliant light to all the Buddha-Worlds, as many as the grains of sands on the shores of the Ganges River. He sent His great voice to all the Maha Bodhisattvas, devas, dragon kings, spirits and human beings as well as the other sentient beings in the Buddha-Worlds. "Listen to me today, I am praising the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva on how he converted and will continue to convert all erring beings in the ten quarters of space by incalculable Infinite powers and Infinite Love and compassion. I hope you will endeavour in your utmost to protect and propagate the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra so as to lead all beings to attain Enlightement after I enter Nibbana." After Sakyamuni Buddha had spoken, Universal Bodhisattva spoke to the Sakyamuni Buddha with clasped hands respectfully, "I have just heard your Honoured Self praising the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva for his incalculable Infinite powers in relieving sentient beings, and hope that you, the Honoured of the World, will tell us in more detail

the ways and means by which Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva brings happiness and benefit to sentient beings so that future generations may understand and practise the Teachings." At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha told the Universal Bodhisattva and all those who were present, "Please listen to me carefully; I will tell you all briefly how Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva converted sentient beings and brought them happiness and good merit. "Universal Bodhisattva replied, "Please speak, Honoured of the World, and we shall all listen to you carefully. "Sakyamuni Buddha told the Universal Bodhisattva, "If both males and females in the future will chant the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva with clasped hands, praising him, paying homage to him, or admiring him, all those people will be exonerated from the sins that they have committed even thirty kalpas ago. Universal Bodhisattva, if both males and females draw the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva with colours or make images of him in earth, stone, wood, gold, silver, brass, or iron and pay homage to him only once, or look at the image of his likeness only once, all of these sentient beings will be reborn in the thirty-three Heavens for a hundred births and will never pass into the evil realms forever. When their happiness in the Heavens come to an end, they shall be reborn in the human world as kings of countries.

If females do not wish to be reborn as females, they must do their very best to make offerings to the images of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in any likeness continuously without any retreat. If they always continue to make offerings with scented flowers, drinks, food, clothing, embroidered scrolls, money, jewels, etc., such women will never be reborn as females for thousands of kalpas after this life. If they desire through compassion to be reborn as females again in order to convert sentient beings, they may do so. If they do not wish to be reborn as females then through the Infinite powers of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, for millions of kalpas, they will not be reborn as females. Again, Universal Bodhisattva, if there are females who are born with ugly faces or ill health they may simply pay homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva by looking at his image for a short time with full respect, and such females will be reborn with beautiful faces for millions of kalpas in the future. If such ugly females do wish to be reborn as females again through their merit of paying homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva earnestly, they will receive the happiness of being reborn as queens of countries or daughters of nobles for millions of rebirths and they will have beautiful appearances. Again, Universal Bodhisattva, if there are males and females who play music or chant mantra in

praise of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva or offering scented flowers to him themselves, or if they encourage one or more persons to follow them by doing the same thing, then all of these beings will have thousands of spirits and devas protecting them day and night in the present life and in the lives to come. They will see no evil, nor encounter any evil or even hear any evil at all forever."

Sakyamuni Buddha said to Universal Bodhisattva again, "If there are wicked sentient beings jeering and laughing at people and those who make offerings, praisings, paying homage to the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, saying that they will get no benefit or merit out of this, or by turning their faces away from them or trying to encourage one person or more persons to stop doing such good acts or deeds or by even a single thought against these people paying tribute to Kistigarbba Bodhisattva, then they will be born into the Avici Hell for kalpas and kalpas and receive heavy punishment even after many Buddhas enter Nibbana. After their punishment, they will be reborn as pretas for thousands of kalpas. After that, they will be born as animals for kalpas and kalpas. They may be reborn as human beings after that, but will suffer great poverty, low births

and be handicapped in one way or another. Their previous karma will cast them into the evil realms again very soon."

Sakyamuni Buddha again addressed Universal Bodhisattva, "To ridicule others for paying respect and making offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva will incur such heavy punishment that it will be more dangerous by far than having erroneous views on the transformations of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, destroying his images and belittling his Teachings."

Sakyamuni Buddha continued, "If there are those who are long in the beds of suffering, whose illnesses are very great, continuing for years and years, having bad dreams, dreams of fierce devils, seeing their dead relatives in those dreams or dreaming of travelling on dangerous paths, or with devils, and perchance they shout aloud in those disturbing dreams, all those sufferings are the result of evil deeds done before in their last lives and their retribution is as yet undecided in its severity. Even though the ill persons are sick unto death but cannot die, the karmic reason therefore not being visible to the human eye, if someone will chant loudly the Ksitigarbha Sutra before images of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and will take the

cherished belongings of the ill person — jewels, raiment or other properties, saying, “On behalf of the sick person we are making these offerings and paying homage.” If they venerate Buddha images or make likenesses of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas or shall construct pagodas or temples or endow oil lamps, or if they shall bestow charity on temples, repeating the verbal part of the offering in front of the sick person and within his hearing distance for three times. Even though the sick person has already passed away, such information as mentioned above should be continuous for seven days loudly. The Ksitigarbha Sutra should also be chanted loudly during this period. Such benefited persons will be free forever from being Cast into the five Avici Hells for severe punishment. They will also have recollection of their previous lives in their rebirths.”

“If males and females write or copy the Ksitigarbha Sutra or teach others to write it or to make his images or teach others to do so, this will produce benefits greater than by the above described way.”

Sakyamuni Buddha continued speaking to Universal Bodhisattva, “If you find persons who chant the Ksiti-

garbha Sutra or who have even one thought of praise of this Sutra or showing respect for him, pray persuade them by all means to persevere unremittingly in such work, never looking back. Tell them they will achieve inconceivable merits — in the present and in the future.

If sentient beings in the future should see visions of devils, spirits or other forms, crying, sighing or frightening them, they are their families from previous lives. All are in evil realms from which they are unable to emerge and are begging for benevolent acts done on their behalf in order that they may be relieved of their sufferings."

Sakyamuni Buddha told Universal Bodhisattva, "Please tell those who have frightening visions to chant the Ksitigarbha Sutra before images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and, if they cannot do this themselves, they should ask someone else to act for them, for three or seven times. When the deceased relatives have heard the Ksitigarbha Sutra for a few times, these deceased ones will find relief and be led to Salvation. Thereafter, the living ones will not again dream of the deceased relatives.

If there are people of low birth, being servants of others and without freedom, please afford them to understand that they are reaping the results of bad karma from their previous existences. Tell them to repent and to pay homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva for one to seven days, chanting the Bodhisattva's name ten thousand times. The resultant good merit of these people of low birth will bring them into high births for innumerable births and they shall never again fall into the evil realms.

If inhabitants of Jambudvipa in future times shall, at the advent of newly-born children, cause the parents to chant the Ksitigarbha Sutra and his name ten thousand times, then the newly-born children, whether male or female, will achieve expiation of the sins of their previous lives and will live long and happy lives. If all those about to be born into this life have done meritorious deeds in their previous existences, their lives here will be even longer and happier.

Dwellers in the Jambudvipa world who are guilty of such sins in their daily life as killing, stealing, adultery, lying etc., are advised to chant the Ksitigarbha Sutra before images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for ten days within a month, such as the first day, the eighth, fourteenth, fif-

teenth, eighteenth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth and thirtieth days, once a day, there will be no suffering to yojanas of distance, east, west, north and south. Within the family, everyone, whether young or old, will not again be born into evil realms for thousands of years.

If people can chant the Ksitigarbha Sutra on the above ten “fasting” days of the month, they will not suffer from sickness and will enjoy every comfort in life. That is why, Universal Bodhisattva, you ought to know that Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has such vividly great power and has accomplished so much to bring benefit to sentient beings. Beings in the Jambudvipa world are closely linked to the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and that is why when those people hear his name or see his likeness or hear even so much as three words, five words, one stanza or one sentence of his Teaching, will live happily and contentedly in the present birth and will be reborn into noble families with pleasant complexion in future for millions of rebirths.”

At that time, the Universal Bodhisattva, having heard Sakyamuni Buddha praising Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, knelt with clasped hands reverently and spoke to the

Buddha, saying, "Honoured of the World, I have long noted the inconceivable Infinite powers of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and his great vows to bring benefits and happiness to sentient beings. That is why I enquire about his wonderful powers and his activities in following and spreading the Teachings, which I promise to follow and spread by my own efforts. Will the Honoured of the World graciously tell us the name of this Sutra and indicate to me the ways and means of propagating this noble teaching?"

Sakyamuni Buddha replied, "This Sutra has three names as follows:

1. Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows.
2. Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Practices.
3. Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Determination.

Since Ksitigarbha made such great vows kalpas ago to bring happiness and benefits to sentient beings, it is the duty of all of you to harmonize yourselves with those vows and to propagate them."

After Universal Bodhisattva heard what Sakyamuni Buddha had said, he withdrew with clasped hands reverently.

Chapter Seven

Benefiting the Living & the Dead

At that time, Ksitigarbha Maha Bodhisattva said to Sakyamuni Buddha, "Honoured of the World, I can see that beings in Jambudvipa have committed sins in actions, words and thoughts. If they have any opportunity to do good, they act with flagging zeal. When opportunity presents itself for the commission of evil deeds, they continue in evil. Such sentient beings are those walking in a mire with heavy loads on their backs. The farther they go, the deeper they sink and the heavier the burden. If they encounter wise persons, they are asked to carry half of the load or all. Owing to the superior energy of the wise, they not only are able to give aid but also to counsel the erring ones to stand firm, determined to err no more once out of the slough of evil, thereafter avoiding all evil ways."

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva again said to the Buddha, "Honoured of the World. The bad habits of those people often originate in something as small as a mote, but they gradually increase. Their parents, family and friends ought to

perform some benevolence on their behalf when the erring ones are about to depart from this life. They can either hang banners bearing sacred texts or burn oil lamps or chant the Sutras. Or they may make offerings before one or more Buddha images, or images of Bodhisattvas. It is meritorious for the relatives to chant the names of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Pacceka Buddhas or even to chant one name or one title of the above sacred ones in front of the dying person within his or her hearing. Their sins, which may cause them to be cast into the evil realms to suffer, will be expiated solely because their families are doing these afore-described pious actions on their behalf.

When dying persons have passed away and their relatives continue to perform meritorious acts on their behalf within forty-nine days immediately after their death, it is assured that the departed ones will never be reborn in an evil state but will go into a Heaven or be reborn to the human world to enjoy longevity and felicity. The living relatives of the departed one, because of their pious acts, will themselves receive inconceivable benefits.

I hope the Honoured of the World, devas, dragons, asuras, pretas, mahorages, humans and sub-humans will all

endeavour to persuade the dwellers in Jambudvipa not to commit sin by killing or any other deed of evil, such offering living sacrifices to spirits or gods on behalf of their departed ones.

Why should you not kill? Because your deed of offering blood-sacrifice will not give even the smallest benefit to the deceased, but will actually increase their sufferings. Their future woe will be more severe as the result of this bloodshed. If the deceased have done some good deeds during life, that would help them to a heavenly rebirth or again as a human, but the evil acts performed on their behalf by relatives will act against their welfare and delay their progress towards liberation.

If those dying beings have no good deeds to their credit and, according to their personal karma, they merit evil births, why should their families be so ill-advised as to do the sin of killing on their behalf? Just as if a person who had suffered hunger for three days and travelled from afar carrying a heavy load of more than a hundred katis, and some neighbour suddenly added to the load, the total weight would become unbearable.

Honoured of the World, it is visible to me that if inhabitants of Jambudvipa can follow the Buddha's Doctrines to do good even as the size of a hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand, one dust mote, they themselves will get benefits personally, according to their own Karma."

Just at that time an honourable elder known as the Elder of Eloquence, who had attained the state of never-returned, joined the assemblage. He had converted beings in the ten quarters of space. In the form of a transformation with clasped hands, he enquired Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva reverently, "Bodhisattva, if relatives of erring deceased beings, whether adult or juvenile, do pious deeds on their behalf will great benefit or Salvation come to them?"

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva replied, "My elderly One, under the supernatural power of the Sakyamuni Buddha, for the benefit of all beings of the present and the generations yet to come, may I answer you in brief. Any sentient being now and hereafter, who hears the name of but one Buddha or Bodhisattva or one Pacceka Buddha at his dying moment, no matter whether this being be sinful or virtu-

ous, he shall be led eventually to Salvation. If anyone, male or female, fails during his lifetime to do meritorious actions, but lives sinfully, then his relatives, whether young or old, ought to do good deeds on his behalf and practise pious observances for him after his death. The departed ones gain one seventh of the merits of such good and pious acts and the remaining six sevenths rebound to the benefit of the living ones who practise these acts of piety. That is why beings of the present and the future should practise meritorious deeds during their lifetime when they are still strong and healthy. The whole merit to offer such good deeds will be achieved by themselves personally. Time is transient, and death will come to one at any moment. Within the forty-nine days after one's death, one is ignorant of his or her Karma. During the period of judgment of one's past deeds, he or she is unable to know what will be the consequences of the future and thereby is extremely worried. If one has done some evil deeds during one's lifetime, one will certainly be cast into the evil state of suffering. Within the period of forty-nine days of one's death, he or she is expecting one's own children or relatives to do good deeds on his or her behalf and thus be relieved of suffering. After the forty-nine days of one's death, one is bound to receive whatever Karma one should

deserve. If one has done evil deeds during one's lifetime, one is subjected to endure sufferings without any help of freedom for thousands of years. One's Karma is able to induce one to be cast into one of the five Avici Hells or in one of the great Hells to continue to suffer for millions of kalpas forever. Again, my elderly One, if relatives and children of the sinful one make offerings of vegetarian food to the Buddha as well as to monks after his death, such good deeds will help the sinful to be relieved from his suffering. Before the meal time of monks, while vegetarian food is under preparation, no edible things should be thrown on the floor and be wasted. The living children and relatives of the deceased should not eat before offering such food to the images of the Buddha and the Venerable monks. If the living ones are not following the above advice earnestly, the deceased will not benefit at all. If they follow the advice piously and energetically, they will get one-seventh of the merit. That is why, my elderly One, if beings of the Jampudvipa world can offer vegetarian food, both to the images of the Buddha and the monks, with respect, not only their deceased parents or relatives will receive the benefit but they themselves, the living ones, will also greatly benefit."

After what Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva had said, millions and millions of spirits and ghosts who had assembled at the thirty-three Heavens from the Jampudvipa world decided to follow the Noble Teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha to guide beings to abstain from bad deeds and to practise meritorious ones.

Then the elderly Person retreated with full respect.

Chapter Eight

Appreciation of Emperor Yama & His Followers — The Ruler of Yamadevaloka & Judge of the Dead

At that time, Emperor Yama of the Hells came to Tusika Heaven from Mahachakravala with an innumerable number of his followers, as listed below, to pay respect to the Sakyamuni Buddha —

1. Devil-king who possesses a resolute attitude towards the poisonous group of Evildoers, for evils committed through actions, words and thoughts are classed as poison. This King of devils leads erring beings to abstain from bad deeds and to practise a good life by showing them the poisonous result of committing sins.

2. Devil-king of violent anger. The outer appearance of this King of devils is frightfully fierce, but his thoughts are compassionate. He tries to convert stubborn and erring beings from committing bad deeds by way of being stern although greatly compassionate inwardly. Thus, he leads the erring to righteousness gradually.

3. Devil-king of Quarrels. Love and hatred, greed and jealousy are the sources of quarrels. This King of devils shows the harmful result of quarrels. As a result, he leads the erring to the happy path of harmony.

4. Devil-king who applies the attitude of a roaring tiger. Tigers are fierce and harmful animals. Evil deeds induce people to commit sins as harmful as tigers.

5. Devil-king of Disaster. This King of devils illustrates the misery of being disobedient to elders and the disastrous result that is to follow later. Therefore, he endeavours to lead such beings to righteousness.

6. Devil-king who possesses the power to fly. The flying Yaksas are led to the Path of Righteousness by this King of devils.

7. Devil-king who possesses a pair of strikingly electrical-form of eyes. This King of devils judges skilfully the right from the wrong. He punishes the wicked with misery, but he bestows happiness upon the meritorious ones.

8. Devil-king with fox-like teeth. Foxes are sly animals. This King of devils shows the harmful results of being

sly and perseveringly reforms sinful beings to practise good deeds.

9. Devil-king who possesses one thousand Eyes and one thousand Hands. This King of devils seizes every opportunity to convert demeritorious beings and to bring happiness and benefit upon them.

10. Devil-king who swallows fierce animals which cause harm to people.

11. Devil-king who carries stone and sand to fill up seas and rivers, when necessary, to bring benefit to people.

12. Devil-king who brings poverty and suffering to sinners so as to see that they suffer and repent. But he bestows treasure and happiness upon the good as soon as they start to practise benevolent deeds.

13. Devil-king who distributes food to the good. But for the wicked, he makes them suffer hunger.

14. Devil-king who is responsible for punishing all misers who, though rich, never practise benevolence.

15. Devil-king who controls wicked animals.

16. Devil-king who controls births of beings as well as their length of life.

17. Devil-king who brings sickness to sinners.

18. Devil-king who is in charge of all kinds of danger —
    a) To bring danger to sinners as punishment.
    b) To save the good from danger.

19. Devil-king with three Eyes, four Eyes or five Eyes.

20. Devil-king who punishes all devils for criminal acts like theft of property or robbery during their lifetime. But for the good, he helps them to accomplish all their wishes.

All the above-named great Kings of Devils, together with numerous inferior Devil-kings, arrived at Tusika Heaven with Emperor Yama to worship the Buddha. These Kings of Devils as well as those of the inferior group have different duties to perform, either to punish those who commit sins or to bring happiness and benefit to those who do good deeds.

It is natural, through the ubiquitous supernatural powers of the Sakyamuni Buddha, the Honoured of the World, and the Ksitgiarbha Bodhisattva, that these Kings were well received in Tusika Heaven and that they all assembled respectfully in a row.

Just at that time, the Emperor Yama knelt before the Buddha and said, “Honoured of the World, we are immensely indebted to your supernatural powers and the valuable assistance of the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva to enable us all to pay homage and respect here at this great assembly. We are exceedingly happy to be blessed with this golden opportunity to gather here and to have your valuable advice. May your attention be drawn to a little problem which is puzzling us? May I have the honour of requesting you to be kind enough to supply us with a compassionate explanation?”

The Buddha then told Emperor Yama, “You are at liberty to ask any question freely, and I shall provide you with a proper and detailed answer.”

Emperor Yama paid full respect to Sakyamuni Buddha, turned with a look at Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and said,

"My Honoured of the World, it is indeed a wonderful gesture by Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva to venture unremittingly, through various ways and means, to relieve the beings from the six Directions of reincarnation. But I wish to know why beings who have just been relieved from punishment commit sins again which cause them to be cast into the state of Suffering once more. Honoured of the World, since the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva is so wonderfully compassionate towards erring beings, why must they ignore following his way of leading a virtuous life and gaining Salvation forever? If you please, my Buddha, kindly furnish me with the necessary solution."

The Honoured of the World then told Emperor Yama, "It is extremely difficult to control and convert the erring beings of the Samsara world. There is no doubt that the compassionate Bodhisattva is striving his utmost to bring erring beings to Salvation through kalpas and kalpas. Even though sinful beings have been cast into the great Hells for punishment, the Bodhisattva is trying his best to lead them to live a virtuous life and to bestow upon them the power of remembering their past deeds. Because erring beings of the Samsara world are prone to committing sins, that is why shortly after they are relieved from their sufferings

they will commit sins again and thus receive punishment once more. It is, in fact, a great pity for the compassionate Bodhisattva to be working so earnestly through kalpas and kalpas to relieve erring beings from their sufferings. One example of which is...

A man, having lost his way while returning home, found himself in the dangerous situation where the surroundings were full of Yaksas, fierce animals and poisonous insects. By chance, he met a wise man who happened to know the way of calming Yaksas, beasts and insects.

The wise man, upon seeing the danger, asked anxiously, “My man, why do you come this way? Do you have any means of controlling these fierce animals?”

Upon hearing such words, the man realised that he was at that moment walking along a dangerous road. The wise man then caught hold of his hand and led him from that dangerous road by showing him the way to the path of Peace and Happiness. Once again, he addressed the man, “Oh, my man, be wise now and never tread this road again, as once you get into this way, it is very difficult for you to get out of it and you will surely perish within.”

The erring man was very grateful, and rejoiced at being led out of danger. Before his departure, the wise man again said to him, "Whenever you meet any of your friends or strangers, either male or female, tell them that this road is full of danger. If they come to this road by mistake, they will lose their lives. Tell them not to be foolish and not to face danger unnecessarily."

The compassionate Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva relieved erring beings from their sufferings and directed them either to Heaven or to the human world to enjoy great happiness.

These beings were then made to realise how one must suffer according to one's misdeeds and how one could enjoy according to one's good actions. Then they would never again commit sins and be cast into the Hell any more. It is very similar to one who had lost his way home and by mistake found himself on the dangerous road and was finally taken away from danger by a wise man. He, too, must remember never to tread such a dangerous road again.

Whenever he met a friend or a stranger, he advised them not to tread that dangerous path. When one is free from danger, he should have the wisdom of not taking such a

risk again. If one enters such a dangerous path once more by mistake, it reveals that he does not have sufficient understanding and may lose his or her life therein. It is similar to one being cast into the evil realms for suffering.

The compassionate Bodhisattva tries his best to lead beings out of the Hells and directs them on the way to Salvation or to be reborn as human beings. They might be ignorant of the results of sins and commit evil again; and according to the Karma, they would be cast into Hell to suffer without any hope of being released."

At that time, the Devil-king of Poison, the Poison of evil actions, words and thoughts, said to the Sakyamuni Buddha respectfully with clasped hands, "Honoured of the World, we innumerable Kings of devils from every corner of the Samsara world are either to bring benefit and happiness to human beings or to cause them sufferings according to their deeds. We have travelled to all corners of the Universe and we are convinced that there are more evil than good human beings. We promise you that whenever or wherever we come across a male or female in any part of the world who though seen practising only a small fraction of good or making any kind of offerings to the images

of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas or is heard chanting a sentence or poem of the Sutras, my followers and I shall treat such persons respectfully as if we pay homage to the Buddhas of the present, past and the future. We shall instruct our followers and the spirits from different places to protect such virtuous beings. We shall never allow any unhappy occasions, disease or any undesirable events from happening, not only to their homes, but also in places close to their residences."

Sakyamuni Buddha was highly delighted and said, "Well, well, since Emperor Yama and your followers are ready to protect such virtuous beings, I shall also instruct the Ruler of Brahmaloka and the Emperor of the thirty-three Heavens to protect you all."

After the interesting discourse, the Devil-king, who was in charge of the longevity of people's lives, rose up from the assembly and spoke to Sakyamuni Buddha, "My Honoured of the World, it is my duty to be in charge of the longevity of human beings in the human world, either during their lifetime or after their death. It is my earnest wish to bring benefit and happiness to human beings, but I observe with sadness that many of the human beings do not realise my

intention to relieve them. As a result, evil ones are not at peace during their lifetime or after their death. When people in this human world are expecting birth of a boy or girl, they should practise meritorious deeds, for such good deeds bring benefit and happiness to the family. My followers and spirits of that place will not only protect both the mother and the newly-born child, but will bestow upon them and their relatives great peace and happiness joyfully. For this reason, when a child is born to a family, it is desirable not to kill any animals as supplement for any tonic for the mother, or to invite friends or relatives in the child's honour by offering or entertaining them with wine, meat and music. Such ways of celebrating the birth of child will never bring happiness to either the mother or the child. For when a pregnant woman is ready for delivery of her child, there are numerous evil devils seen by the side of the mother to suck her blood. In order to safeguard the mother, I usually order the spirit of that place to come and protect the mother and child and to bring them peace and happiness. When the mother and child are at peace after birth, they should make offerings to the spirits to express their gratitude for the protection given. If, instead of offerings to the spirits, friends and relatives are entertained by

the killing of animals, both the mother and the newly-born child will suffer punishment.

When a person in this human world is nearing death, I always try my best to prevent this dying person, irrespective of whether the being is a good or an evil person, from being cast into the evil State. If this dying person has been doing good deeds during his or her lifetime, my power of relieving him or her will be successful.

Even in the case of a person who has done good deeds throughout his life, there may be innumerable evil spirits in the form of their past parents or relatives to tempt the dying person to the evil State of suffering. If the dying person has done bad deeds during his life, these evil spirits will no doubt be successful in arresting him or her to the State of suffering.

Honoured of the World, if people in the Samsara world, either male or female, be seen unconscious during their moment of death, when they cannot distinguish the good from the bad, at such a moment they will not be able to see or hear. That is the time for the relatives of this dying person to chant the Sutra and to make offerings to the images

of the Buddha as well as the Bodhisattva, for these good deeds will help to drive away the evil spirits. The Buddha and the Bodhisattva will keep the dying person away from the evil State.

Honoured of the World, if all dying persons have an opportunity of hearing only the name of one Buddha or one Bodhisattva, or the chanting of the Sutra, or even the chanting of one sentence or one poem of any Sutra, I can assure you that these dying persons will be kept away from the five Avici Hells. If a dying person has committed only small evil deeds which will cause him to be cast into the evil State for puiiishment, he will be relieved upon hearing the name of the Buddha or Bodhisattva or even the chanting of the Sutra."

Sakyamuni Buddha then replied to the Devil-king who was in charge of Birth and Death by saying, "It is very kind of you to make such a strong vow with your Infinite Loving Kindness to protect human beings, male or female, during their lifetime or after death. I earnestly hope that you will try your best to carry out your vow without ceasing, so that you will be able to relieve all these erring beings to Salvation and to bring them everlasting happiness."

The Devil-king who was in charge of Birth and Death said, "Please do not be worried, for I shall continuously try my utmost to protect the beings in the Samsara world, both at the moment of their birth and at the moment of their death, and thus enable them to be in peace and happiness. I strongly look forward to the occasion when all human beings will listen to my words so as to achieve real Salvation and to attain great benefit."

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha told Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, "This Devil-king of Birth and Death has been a great King of Devils for many thousands of lives. He has done his best to protect human beings at their moment of birth and at their moment of death. In fact, he is not a devil as supposed, but out of compassion and great Infinite Loving Kindness, he has transformed himself into the form of a devil. He will attain Buddhahood after one hundred and seventy kalpas by the name of Nirlaksana Buddha. He will live a long life for countless and happy kalpas in a world named Purity.

The story of this great king of Devils is beyond thought or description and persons converted by him are also uncountable."

Chapter Nine

The Chanting of the Buddha's Name

At that time, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva said to Sakyamuni Buddha, "Honoured of the World, let me now declare how human beings in the future will acquire great benefit and happiness, during their lifetime and at the moment of their death. I anticipate you to be congenial enough to listen to me."

Sakyamuni Buddha then disclosed to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, "It is because of your compassionate Infinite Loving Kindness that you long to assert about a possible tendency of relieving all the erring beings from the six States of reincarnation. Of course, it is the proper time now. Please speak promptly as I am about to enter Nibbana. I wish to bless you with success in discharging the strong vow so that I shall have no worry about human beings in the future."

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva told the Exalted Buddha, "Honoured of the World, I name below a list of Buddhas for your hearing —

1. Ananta, (Immeasurable) Buddha

Innumerable kalpas ago there was a Buddha by the name of Ananta (Immeasurable) Buddha. Any male or female who has a chance of listening to the name of this Buddha, even only entertaining a short thought of respect for him, will be able to escape forty kalpas of Suffering from Birth and Death. People will attain infinite happiness if he or she makes images of this Buddha, gives offerings and admires him.

2. Precious Nature Buddha

Again, innumerable kalpas ago, there was a Buddha by the name of Precious Nature. Any male or female, who has a chance of listening to this Buddha and creates a thought of respect towards him, will finally attain Buddhahood.

3. Padmapani Buddha

Again, there was a Buddha by the name of Padmapani, one of the forms of Avalokitsvara (Kuan Yim, the Goddess of Mercy) holding a lotus. Any male or female, who has the opportunity of listening to the name of this Buddha will merit by a rebirth in the six

Deva Lokas (i.e. Heaven of Desire) for one thousand times and be within the bliss of Buddhahood.

4. SIMHANANDA BUDDHA

Innumerable kalpas ago, there was a Buddha by the name of Simhananda Buddha (a term designating authoritative of powerful approach). Any male or female who has the chance of listening to the name of this Buddha and thinking of him with deep respect, will benefit in the meeting of countless Buddhas with their blessings by finally attaining Buddhahood.

5. KRAKUCCHANDA BUDDHA

Again, there was a Buddha by the name of Krakucchanda (the first of the Buddhas of the present Bhadrakalpa, the fourth of the seven ancient Buddhas). Any male or female who has a chance of listening to the name of this Buddha, and shows earnest respect to him by admiring him, will become Mahabrahmanas at an assembly of one thousand Buddhas during the Bhadrakalpa. With blessings from this Buddha, he or she will attain Buddhahood later. One can get better merit if one chants the name of this Buddha earnestly.

6. Vipasyin Buddha

Again, there was a Buddha by the name of Vipasyin. Any male or female, who has a chance to listen to the name of this Buddha, will not be cast into the evil State of Sufferings. He or she will always be reborn in Heaven or as a human being to be benefited with great happiness.

7. Ratnaketu Buddha

Again, innumerable kalpas ago, there was a Buddha by the name of Ratnaketu Buddha. Any male or female who happens to listen to the name of this Buddha, will never be cast into the State of Sufferings and will always be reborn in Heaven to enjoy great bliss.

8. Precious Light Buddha

Again, there was a Buddha by the name of Precious Light. Any male or female, who happens to listen to the name of this Buddha and to think of him with respect, will become an Arahat within a short period.

9. Kasaya Buddha

Again, there was a Buddha by the name of Kasaya. Any male or female, who has a chance to listen to the name of this Buddha, will escape one hundred kalpas of punishment of Birth and Death.

10. Mahabhijna Jnanadhibhu Buddha

Again, there was a Buddha by the name of Mahabhijna Jnanadhibhu. Any male or female who has a chance of listening to his name, will have the opportunity of meeting innumerable Buddhas to preach to him or her and finally attain Buddhahood. There are also other Buddhas as in the following:

1. The Buddha by the name of Pure Moonlight.
2. The Buddha by the name of King of Mountains.
3. The Buddha by the name of King of Purification.
4. The Buddha by the name of Victorious Wisdom.
5. The Buddha by the name of Accomplishment of Wisdom.
6. The Buddha by the name of Superiority.
7. The Buddha by the name of Wonderful Voice.
8. The Buddha by the name of Full Moonlight.
9. The Buddha by the name of Moon-like Face as well as a great number to be acquainted with.

Honoured of the World, all beings whether from the Heaven or from the human realms, either male or female, of the present or the future, who can chant the name of one of the above Buddhas, will gain immeasurable merit. He or she will receive more merit if he or she chants the names of more Buddhas. Such beings will attain great benefit during their lifetime or even after death. They will never be cast into the evil State of sufferings. If the relatives of the dying person chant the name of only one Buddha, the dying person will be relieved from the punishment of his sins (except the punishment in the Avici Hells). The punishment in the Avici Hells is so great that the sinners who commit great sins will find it difficult to escape from such punishment through millions of kalpas.

If others can chant the names of Buddhas for the dying person, his or her punishment will gradually be lightened. It is better if the dying person can also chant the names of Buddhas for he or she will receive immeasurable happiness and avoid countless punishment for misdeeds committed while alive."

Chapter Ten

The Comparison of Merits for Alms-giving

At that time, the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, under the supernatural power of Sakyamuni Buddha, rose from his seat and knelt down with clasped hands, saying to Him, "Honoured of the World, I can see that the comparison of merits for alms-giving differ from each other in small or great ways. Some receive their reward for only one life, some receive their reward for ten lives, and some even receive great bliss for hundreds of thousands of lives. I do not know the reason why it differs in such a great way and hope that you will graciously explain it to me." The Sakyamuni Buddha replied, "Now, I shall give you the comparison of merits, whether great or small. As rewards for the sentient beings who practise alms-giving in the Jampudvipa, I tell all who are assembled here at the thirty-three Heavens and I hope you will listen to me carefully." Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva said to Sakyamuni Buddha, "I'm quite doubtful about this and I would like to hear the comparison of merits for almsgiving."

The Sakyamuni Buddha said, "If kings, nobles, honourable elders, Maha Ksatriyas, Great Brahmans in Jampudvipa (the Continent situated at the South of Mount Sumeru, comprising of the world we live in), come across people who suffer great poverty, or unreformed beings, if such people as those mentioned give alms to them through great compassion, love and kindness, smilingly, and give gifts to those poor beings with their own hands or through their representatives and talk to them in consoling tones, such donors of gifts gain merit as great as the total number of grains of sands in the Ganges River. It is because these donors of gifts are practising Infinite Love and Kindness even to the poorest and the lowest births and unreformed beings, that is why for hundreds of thousands of lives they receive their well-earned good merits of the seven jewels of riches. They are well provided for in good food and clothing in those lives yet to come. Again if kings, nobles and Brahmans come across Buddhist images of Buddhas, temples or pagodas, Bodhisattvas, Arahats, and all Pacceka Buddhas in the lives to come, if they prepare almsgivings and offerings, offering them personally, such generous donors will be reborn as kings of the thirty-three Heavens receiving great bliss for three kalpas. If these donors transfer their merit to the beings of the ten quarters

of space these donors will become Mahabrahma devarajas, kings or the eighteen Bramalokas, for ten kalpas continuously. Again, if in the future, kings, prime ministers, nobles, honourable elders, Maha Ksatriyas and Brahmans come across Buddhist pagodas and temples or Buddhist Sutras and images which are in bad condition and with determination for their repair, or rebuild them, such generous donors, whether they practise almsgiving themselves or persuade others to do alms-giving or charitable acts, whether they persuade one person or many hundreds of thousands of people to practise the same charitable acts, these charitable donors will be reborn as Chakravarti for hundreds of thousands of lives. Those who have been encouraged and persuaded by the above donors to practise alms-giving will be reborn as kings of small countries for hundreds of thousands of lives. If, moreover, they transfer their merit to others in the presence of the Buddhas, pagodas or temples, such great donors of gifts will all attain Buddhahood. The reward for practising such great merit is beyond all description. If, in the future, kings, prime ministers, nobles, when they see aged ones suffering from disease, women giving birth, if they have but one momentary thought of sympathy, to give them aid, medicines, food and drink, or bathings, so as to assure them some measure

of peace and happiness, such merits are inconceivable and donors of these things will always be reborn as a Suddhavasodeva for one hundred kalpas. After this period, they will be always reborn in the Six Deva Lakas (i. e. The Heavens of Desire) for two hundred kalpas. Finally, they will attain Buddhahood, but prior to that for hundreds and thousands of births, they will never be reborn as dwellers in evil realms or hear any voice of suffering. If kings of countries or Brahmans in the future can practise such meritorious deeds, they will receive boundless blessings. If they transfer their merits to others, whether great or small merit, they will be reborn as Cakravatis and finally attain Buddhahood.

That is why, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, you should do your utmost to encourage sentient beings to practise meritorious deeds by following these examples. If virtuous people in the future will practise meritorious deeds even as small as a hair, or a grain of sand, or a dust mote, they will receive blessings and benefits which cannot be expressed by examples, as they will be so great.

If virtuous people of future times meet with images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Pratyeka Buddhas or Cakravartis

and make offerings to them, they will also receive numerous blessings and benefits, and will always be reborn either as humans or devas, enjoying great bliss. If such people will transfer their merits to the beings of the ten quarters of space, such donors will get great benefits and blessings beyond all statement by examples.

If virtuous persons of future times come across Mahayanist Sutras or hear only one stanza or even one sentence of the Sutras and have a feeling of deep respect for that utterance, or if they sincerely praise the Sutras, or make offerings piously, they will receive innumerable merits. If they will transfer their merits to the beings of the ten quarters of space, their blessings are beyond all words. If virtuous persons of future times come to new Buddhist pagodas, new temples, new Mahayanist Sutras, and make offerings, paying homage with reverent attitudes of deepest respect, and if they come across old or destroyed ones, and make a vow to repair or restore these structures or shall encourage others to do this meritorious work with them, such virtuous people who respond to this encouragement shall be born as kings of countries for thirty lives and the encourager himself will always be reborn as a Cakravarti and will preach Buddhadharma to the kings of countries. If virtu-

ous people of future times will practise good deeds according to the Buddha's Teachings, or make offerings for repairing Buddhist pagodas or temples or mending Buddhist Sutras, their merit, small as a hair though it be, or a dust mote or a grain of sand or a drop of water, if they will transfer such merits to beings of the ten realms of space, such meritorious persons will receive inconceivably great bliss for hundreds of thousands of lives. If they will transfer their merits to their family and relatives, their relatives will receive happiness for three lives. To give one benefit is to receive hundreds of thousands in return. That is why, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, the merit of alms-giving is of such magnitude."

Chapter Eleven

Earthly Spirits Protecting the Dhamma

At that time, the Spirit of the strong earth said to the Sakyamuni Buddha, "Honoured of the World, in the past, I have paid homage to innumerable Maha Bodhisattvas who possessed inconceivable honour and wisdom and who have converted boundless sentient beings. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva made strong and deep vows among these Bodhisattvas. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has great relationship between the sentient beings in Jampudvipa. Such as Manjusri, Samantabhadra Bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Maitreya Buddha, all of whom make hundreds of thousands of transformations to convert the erring beings of the six Directions of Reincarnation and their vows have already been achieved. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva made strong vows as many as the grains of sands of the Ganges River to convert the sentient beings of the six Directions of Reincarnation. Honoured of the World, I can see that the sentient beings of the present and future can make images of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in iron, brass, silver, gold or simple drawings and enshrine them in cases

either of earth, stone, bamboo or wood and keep the cases in a neat place in the south of their residence of purity and pay homage to the Bodhisattva with the deepest reverence and earnest admiration and make scented offerings, such pious persons will receive ten kinds of benefits around their residences. What are the ten kinds of benefits? They are as follows:

1. Their soil will be rich by producing good harvest.
2. The whole family will be in peace forever.
3. All deceased relatives will be born in the heavens.
4. All the living relatives will have longevity.
5. All of their aspirations will be achieved.
6. They will never suffer the danger of flood and fire.
7. All bad becomings will be done away with.
8. They will never have bad dreams.
9. They will be protected by guardians wherever they go.
10. They will always come across holy conditions.

Honoured of the World, sentient beings at present and in the future will receive the same kinds of benefit if they practise the same kinds of merit and offerings at their

residences. Honoured of the World, if sentient beings in the future keep the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra or Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's images in their homes or if they also chant the Sutra of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva or make offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, I shall do my very best to protect such persons day and night always, and they will never come across floods, fire, robbery, theft, destructive calamities or any other disastrous happenings, either big or small. "Sakyamuni Buddha told the Spirit of the strong earth, "You are powerful and other spirits cannot be compared to yourself. It is because all the sentient beings in the Jampudvipa are protected by you. Every material, from a grain of sand to the most precious jewel, is produced from the earth through your Infinite powers; and you are praising the meritorious deeds of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. Your merits and your powers are a thousand times greater than those of other earthly spirits. If sentient beings of the future make offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva or chant the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra or lead a meritorious life according to the Teachings of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, you should protect them all with your supernatural powers and prevent all of them from suffering and not even allow them to come across any unhappy circumstances or even allow such unhappy hap-

penings to come to their ears. They are not only protected by your good self but they are also protected by the devas. By paying homage to the images of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva or chanting the Ksitigarbha Sutra, they will not only be protected by divine beings but will be free from the ocean of sufferings and finally attain Nibbana."

Chapter Twelve

The Benefit through Sight & Hearing

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha, the Honoured of the World, was radiating various kinds of great, blazing, perfectly coloured lights from the crown of His head. The head controls the whole body and the crown of the head is the superior of the whole. The Buddha radiated light from the crown of His head to show to the gathering that He himself also has the highest respect for the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and his Sutra.

After radiating different kinds of lights, the Buddha also produced wonderful sounds. His intention of showing light and producing sounds was to communicate to the gathering that excellent benefit can be obtained from sight and hearing.

The different colours of light revealed to the gathering that sentient beings of different types might be ignorant in committing sins and be cast into the Hells for punishment, yet they would have every opportunity and pleasure of being relieved by the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva out of their

sufferings and also be guided to the Path of Righteousness and finally attain Buddhahood. For light represents transcendental wisdom which enlightens beings in every corner of all universes without exception.

The Honoured of the World addressed all those who were present at the thirty-three Heavens, praising the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva for bringing inconceivable benefit to devas and human beings, and telling them how Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva practised meritorious deeds during his career of following the ten stages leading to Buddhahood — never retreating, but forging ahead to Nibbana. After what Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva had said there was one Maha Bodhisattva named Avalokitesvara who rose from the seat, kneeling down before the Sakyamuni Buddha with clasped hands, and spoke to Sakyamuni Buddha respectfully, "Honoured of the World, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has great compassion on sentient beings and practises Infinite Loving Kindness by having incalculable transformations to lead sentient beings out of their sufferings. The meritorious deeds and the Infinite powers of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva are beyond description. I heard you, the Honoured of the World, and innumerable Buddhas of the ten quarters of space all praising Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva saying that the

merits of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva are so great that even Buddhas of the past, present and the future cannot give the fullest account of them.

You, Honoured of the World, have been so kind as to promise to tell all who are present here the profound activities of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. We earnestly hope that you will be kind enough, for the benefit of the sentient beings of the present and the future, to describe the inexpressible benefits and blessings he has conferred on sentient beings, and thus let everyone in the eight categories know how to pay respect to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in order to attain happiness."

The Sakyamuni Buddha told the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, "You have a close relationship with the sentient beings of the Samsara world whether they be devas, dragons, males, females, spirits, devils, and all the erring beings of the six categories of beings who hear your name, see your image, admire your dignity, praise your profound kindness, all of them will proceed straight to the attainment of Buddhahood without retreat. Before they attain Buddhahood, they will always be reborn as devas or as human beings enjoying great bliss. When they have earned enough mer-

its of good deeds then they will meet Buddhas who will predict their attainment of Buddhahood. Now, through having a great compassion for the erring beings of the sentient worlds, you request me to tell you the inconceivable benefit Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva confers on sentient beings. I will certainly do this and hope that you will listen attentively." Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva replied, "Please do so, Honoured of the World."

Sakyamuni Buddha told Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, "When the happiness of devas in the ten quarters of space in the future or past comes to an end, they have five signs of decay and are to be cast into the evil realms. If these devas, when the five signs of decay are approaching them, have the opportunity of seeing the image once or paying homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva only once, such devas will have increased happiness and will never be cast into the three evil realms forever.

"If these devas make offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva such as scented flowers, clothing, food and drink, precious jewels, etc., they will receive innumerable happiness and benefits in return. If sentient beings of the six categories of beings of the present and the future in different worlds,

hear the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva at their dying stage, they will never be reborn to the three evil realms. If parents or relatives of the dying person sell all of his belongings, riches, properties, and use the money to make images of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, then the dying person comes to know the meritorious deeds done on his behalf, although the person should suffer a severe disease according to his own Karma, instead he fully recovers very quickly and has longevity.

“If the dying person loses his life according to his Karma and should be cast into the evil realms, due to the meritorious deeds done on his behalf, all of his punishments will be extinguished and he will be born as a deva or human being, enjoying great bliss. If sentient beings of the present or the future who have lost their parents, sisters or brothers during their early childhood and think of their deceased relatives when they are fully grown and long to know where they have been reborn, such grown up persons can make images of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, hearing his name, admiring his image or paying homage to him from one day to seven days continuously without any retreat, although the deceased relatives may merit being cast into the evil realms for kalpas, due to the meritorious

deeds practised on their behalf, they are freed from their punishment and will be reborn either as devas or humans receiving great bliss.

"If the deceased relatives of such meritorious persons have already been reborn as devas or human beings according to their Karma with great happiness on account of what their relatives have practised on their behalf, they shall receive even greater happiness and infinite bliss. If such grown up persons can continue to pay respect to the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's images continuously, chanting his name innumerable times for twenty-one days, whole heartedly, then Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva will appear before them and tell them the exact places where their deceased relatives have been reborn. Or through the supernatural powers of the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, they will be taken by him to the various realms personally to see where their former relatives are.

"If they can chant the name of the Bodhisattva for a thousand times every day and continue to do so for one thousand days, the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva will send forth earthly spirits to protect them throughout their lives, and they will enjoy happiness, prosperity and longevity, and

will not experience suffering or sorrow. Neither will they come across unhappiness nor shall evil enter their homes. Finally, they will attain Buddhahood. If there are people, either male or female, in the future who desire to relieve sentient beings, to practise compassionate deeds, to convert sentient beings and to possess great wisdom in order to get out of their suffering of the Trilokas, such persons, if they see the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and chant the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, taking refuge in Ksitgarbha Bodhisattva, making offerings or paying homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, all their wishes will be achieved without any obstacle forever.

"If the sentient beings of the present and future have innumerable wishes or they have the desire of doing innumerable good deeds, they will be successful in all of their aspirations if they pay respect to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, praising him, taking him as their refuge or paying homage to his image. If such persons long for Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva to protect them forever they will see Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in their dreams, to predict that they will be able to attain Buddhahood. Even if males and females in the future have great faith in the Mahayana Sutra and aspire to read and recite this Sutra, though they are taught

by clever teachers, they may forget it due to their ignorance brought about by previous bad Karma; but when they hear the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva or see his image or likeness, and make various offerings to him and place a cup of pure water in front of him for one day and one night, then with clasped hands and with deepest reverence, facing South, they may drink the water with great faith.

“After drinking the water, they must abstain from all evil deeds and observe the precepts piously for seven days or twenty-one days. By so doing, these persons will see the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in various manifestations in the dream state, showing the Bodhisattva pouring water of wisdom on their heads. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva will endow these persons with wisdom. Upon awakening, they will then have sufficient wisdom to understand the Sutra, remembering every sentence and stanza forever.

“If people in the future suffer from insufficient food and clothing, unsuccessful in whatever they wish to do, always attacked by sickness or disastrous happenings, finding no peace in their family life, separated from their beloved ones, seeing only dreadful things in their dreams or are

met by other calamities that befall them, if such sorrowful beings hear the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva or see his images or chant his name ten thousand times with deepest reverence, their unhappiness will disappear gradually. They will live in peace and happiness.

"If virtuous people in the future, due to their personal business or public affairs or any other important functions, have to travel through deep forests, to cross rivers or seas with strong rapids, or to walk on dangerous paths, such people, if they chant the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva ten thousand times, then wherever they go or whatever they do they will always be protected by spirits and devas and will have happiness and peace forever. Even if they come across dangerous animals such as tigers, wolves or lions, these can never do harm to such virtuous persons."

Sakyamuni Buddha then told Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, "The Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has a close relationship with the sentient beings of Jambudvipa. If we want to speak about the happiness and benefits which Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva confers upon sentient beings, it will take hundreds of thousands of kalpas and still we would not be able to cover the full account: That is why you, Avalokitesvara,

through your supernatural powers, should do your utmost to propagate the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra, so that sentient beings in the Samsara world will have the opportunity to enjoy happiness and peace for millions of kalpas."

At that time, the Sakyamuni Buddha spoke again in stanzas, "Even if we spoke for kalpas we could not describe in detail Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's supernatural powers, which are as many as the grains of sands in the Ganges River. Seeing, hearing, or paying homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, even for a moment of thought, will bring innumerable benefits to human beings as well as devas. If human beings, dragons or spirits are cast into the evil realms according to their Karma, they will be exonerated from punishment if they take their refuge in Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. If people who have lost their parents or beloved ones during their infancy wish to know where their deceased relatives have been reborn, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva will transform himself into various manifestations and personally show them the places where their relatives are, provided that they make images of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, pay homage to him and continue to chant his name a thousand times a day for twenty-one days continuously. Even though the deceased relatives have been cast

into evil realms, they will be relieved of suffering by Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. If they continue to chant and do such virtuous activities these persons will receive the opportunity of attaining Buddhahood.

If people wish to practise the Bodhisattva career and get out of the three worlds of suffering, they should first pay homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's image, and all their aspirations will be achieved and they will never come across any obstacles. Secondly, if people make a vow to chant Sutras and lead erring beings to Salvation, although they make a very good vow, but owing to their previous Karma they are very forgetful through bad memory, if such persons make offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva such as scented flowers, clothing, food and drink or by placing a cup of pure water on Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's altar for one day and one night and then drink the water after praying, and if such persons observe the five precepts for twenty-one days, remembering or thinking of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's name with deepest reverence, they will attain wisdom after seeing numerous transformations of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in their dreams and remember whatever Sutra that comes to their ears, for hundreds of

thousands of births, they will attain such wisdom through the supernatural powers of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.

“Thirdly, if people suffering from poverty, sickness, misfortune in the family, separated from beloved ones, troubled dreams, unsuccessful in whatever they wish for, if such persons pay homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva’s image, all their undesirable conditions will disappear. They are protected by spirits and devas and will enjoy life with sufficiency in everything. If people come across dangerous animals, wicked people, fierce spirits or devils, natural disasters when they travel in the forests or across the seas, if they pay homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and make offerings to him, all of the aforenamed disasters will be prevented.”

Sakyamuni Buddha said to Avalokitesvara, “Listen to me. To describe the supernatural powers of the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva would take endless kalpas and still I would not be able to enumerate them all.”

“People receive great bliss if they hear Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva’s name and pay homage to his image and make offerings to him. If they transfer their merit to the

beings of the ten quarters of space they will be relieved of the sufferings of birth and death and finally attain Buddhahood. That is why, Avalokitesvara, you must familiarize people in as many countries as the grains of sands in the Ganges River with the incalculable attributes of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.”

Chapter Thirteen

Sakyamuni Buddha's Instruction to Human Beings & Devas

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha raised His golden arms, touching Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's head and said, "Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, your supernatural power, your Infinite Loving Kindness, your wisdom and your eloquent millions of kalpas to praise you and your incomparable activities – yet they can never give the fullest account. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, remember that I am standing in the presence of such a multitude who have assembled at these thirty-three Heavens to declare unto you that you must not allow any sentient beings to fall into the evil state of suffering for even one day and one night. So much the more, you should never allow them to be cast to the five Avici Hells or the last and the deepest of the eight hot Hells where the culprits suffer, die or instantly return to suffering without interruption for millions of kalpas. Sentient beings are prone to evil habits, and when they reform they easily

yield to temptation, backslide and, worst of all, the bad habits will multiply. That is why it is necessary to have millions and millions of transformations to aid each erring one according to his own weakness and avoid it. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, I now place the guardianship of all these beings into your hands. Encourage even the slightest of good deeds and encourage beings, either devas or human beings, male or female, never to discontinue their efforts to practise even a small good deed. It is your profound duty, through your supernatural powers, to protect such beings and help them to improve their good deeds without relenting. In future, if any beings have Karma that brings them into Hell and can remember the name of one Buddha or one Bodhisattva or one passage or even one sentence from the Mahayana Sutra when they reach the gate of the Hell, then through your supernatural powers, you should lead these beings out of their sufferings. Show them your various transformations and bring them to Salvation to enjoy Supreme Bliss."

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha spoke in stanzas, "Now I place in your hands sentient beings of the present and future and I exhort you never to allow any sentient beings

to fall into any of the evil worlds, by your supernatural powers and obligations."

At that time, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva knelt down with clasped hands and spoke to Sakyamuni Buddha, "Honoured of the World, please do not be worried; if any sentient beings of the future have only one thought of respect for the Buddha's Teachings, I shall endeavour to the utmost to relieve such people out of the sufferings of Birth and Death and lead them to Salvation by numerous ways and means. If I come to know any persons who practise meritorious deeds, I shall make a strong effort to help them to proceed to Buddhahood without falling back."

At that time, one Bodhisattva by the name of Dharmakaya Bodhisattva said to Sakyamuni Buddha, "Honoured of the World, since I have come to this gathering and have heard the Buddha praising the inconceivable merits of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, please tell me how many kinds of benefits will accrue to those who hear the Ksitigarbha Sutra, his name, or pay homage to his images? I ask this in order that I may help beings in the future." Sakyamuni Buddha told the Bodhisattva, "Listen to me carefully and I shall tell you in detail. If virtuous people of the future see the Ksitigar-

bha Bodhisattva's image, hear the Ksitigarbha Sutra, chant the Ksitigarbha Sutra, make offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, pay homage to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, they will get twenty-eight kinds of benefits as under:

1. They will be protected by devas and dragons.
2. Their ability to do good deeds will increase.
3. Opportunities for doing good will increase.
4. The will to approach Buddhahood will continue unfailingly.
5. Such people will enjoy sufficiency of food and clothing.
6. They will be free from all diseases.
7. They will never suffer from floods or fire.
8. They shall not fall victims to robbery and loss of goods.
9. They will be respected and admired by people.
10. They will be protected and assisted by spirits and devas.
11. Females shall be reborn as males.
12. The females will become daughters of kings and nobles.
13. They will be reborn with good complexion.
14. They will be reborn in the heavens for many lives.
15. They will be reborn as kings or rulers of countries.

16. They will have the wisdom to recollect their previous lives.
17. They will be successful in all their aspirations.
18. They will have happy family relations.
19. They will be free from all disastrous happenings.
20. They will be free from bad Karma forever.
21. Wherever they go, they shall be safe.
22. They shall always have peaceful dreams.
23. Their deceased relatives will be free from sufferings.
24. They will be reborn with happiness.
25. They will be praised by divine beings.
26. They will be intelligent and skilful.
27. They will have compassion for others.
28. They will finally attain Buddhahood.

Again, Dharmakaya Bodhisattva, if devas, dragons, devils or spirits hear the inconceivable merits of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, and praise Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, they will attain seven kinds of benefits as under —

1. They can attain the divine stages quickly.
2. They will be free from bad Karma.
3. They will be protected by Buddhas.
4. They will proceed towards Buddhahood without falling back.

5. Their energy of will to do right will be increased.
6. They will have the power to recollect past lives.
7. They will finally attain Buddhahood.

When all these innumerable Buddhas, Maha Bodhisattvas, devas, dragons etc., from the ten quarters of space, had heard Sakyamuni Buddha praising the inconceivable, supernatural powers of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, flowers and precious gems were seen falling down from Heaven as offerings to Sakyamuni Buddha and Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. With clasped hands and deep reverence, they all returned to their own realms.

